

REMARKS

Claims 1-8, 10-12, 14, and 16-28 are currently pending.

On page 3 of the Office Action, claims 1-3, 8, 10-12, 14, 23, 25, 27, and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,964,886 (Slaughter) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,634,122 (Loucks).

Slaughter is directed to a virtual disk system for accessing data in storage devices comprised in different nodes. Slaughter allegedly ensures consistent mapping data and file permission data among nodes.

Loucks is directed to data synchronization between users in distributed file systems. According to Loucks, control of access to data using a token is provided.

The Examiner alleged that the present invention is a combination of the nodes of Slaughter and the data access control by token control of Loucks.

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 2, 8, 10-12, 14, 27, and 28 are patentable over the references, as neither Slaughter nor Loucks, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests, "asking said first token managing portion to acquire the access permission against the access request, and asking the permitted node that has update permission for the file to access to the file when said first token managing portion is not capable of acquiring the access permission," as recited in claim 1, for example.

That is, Slaughter does not teach or suggest the conflict of accesses from a plurality of nodes to one shared piece of data. Loucks adjusts access conflict before granting tokens and does not disclose the feature of the present invention in which a different node asks a node having update permission for access to the shared file. When a plurality of access requests occur in Loucks, tokens collide, and when collision occurs, a "token revoke process" is executed. See Loucks, column 10, lines 30-33 and Fig. 8b.

Thus, the present invention and Loucks are completely different from one another in the way permission to access shared data is granted, for example. Loucks also does not disclose the feature of the present invention regarding a different node asking a node having the update permission (write token) to perform a process to access a shared file.

As a result, the present invention minimizes influence on the system operation of a newly joined node. See specification of the present invention, page 5, lines 6-12.

In light of the foregoing, the above-identified claims are patentable over the references for at least the reasons presented above. As the dependent claims depend from the independent claims, the dependent claims are patentable over the references for at least the reasons presented above for the independent claims.

On page 9 of the Office Action, claims 4-7, 16-22, 24, and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Slaughter in view of Loucks and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,515,537 (Tavares).

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 2 and 14 are patentable over the references, as none of the references, alone or in combination, teach or suggest, "asking the other node that has the update permission to access the file instead of accessing the file in said node when said IO request intercepting portion is not capable of acquiring the access permission," as recited in claims 2 and 14.

Although Tavares discloses an update process, Tavares does not disclose or suggest the asking operation identified above for the present invention.

Therefore, independent claims 2 and 14 are patentable over the references for at least the reasons presented above. As dependent claims 4-7, 16-22, 24, and 26 depend from respective independent claims, the dependent claims are patentable over the references for at least the reasons presented above for the independent claims.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

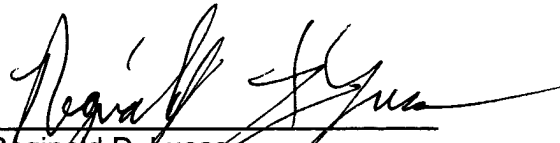
Respectfully submitted,

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4-20-06

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